

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 OPR-01 NIC-01 SY-04 OC-05 SCA-01 /062 W

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O 251115Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7608

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA IMMEDIATE

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNAVEUR IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR IMMEDIATE

CINCUSAREUR IMMEDIATE

CINCUSAFE IMMEDIATE

USDOCOSOUTH IMMEDIATE

USNMR SHAPE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 1541

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (FOR EO, TAGS, AND SUBJECT)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS GR

SUBJECT: MILITARY ALERT IN GREECE FEB 24.

REF: A) ATHENS 1525 B) ATHENS 1521

1. SUMMARY. GREEK GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS CONFIRMED SMALL GROUP "UNREPENTANT ARMY OFFICERS" ASSOCIATED WITH MAIN PERPETRATORS OF DICTATORSHIP NOW UNDE ARREST, ATEMPTED EXECUTE CONSPIRATORIAL MOVEMENTS FEBRUARY 24. SOME 25-35 OFFICERS INVOLVED IN PLOT REPORTEDLY ARRESTED AND DETAINED. OPPOSITION LEADERS IN PARLIAMENT PRESSED GOVERNMENT TO CONFIDENTIAL

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ENLIGHTEN NATON ON EVENT, AND LEAST TWO ATHENS

NEWSPAPERS HAVE CALLED FOR THOROUGH CLENSING OF ARMED FORCES. END SUMMARY.

2. AN APPARANT COUP ATTEMPT, SPEARHEADED BY A SMALL NUMBER OF MID-GRADE ARMY OFFICERS WITH CLOSE TIES TO FORMER MILITARY REGIME, ABORTED EVENING FEBRUARY 24. (SEE ATHENS 1521 FOR EMBASSY'S FIRST REPORT.) A STATE OF ALERT WAS DECLARED BY GOVERNMENT AND BOTH MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND PRESS SECRETARY ASSURED CITIZENRY THAT ABSOLUTE ORDER AND SAFETY NOW PREVAIL THROUGHOUT COUNTRY AND THAT DEMOCRATIC NORMALCY OBTAINS.

3. BEST AVAILABLE PUBLIC INFORMATION INDICATES MINISTER DEFENSE AVEROFF WAS APPRAISED OF FORTHCOMING COUP ATTEMPT MORNING FEBRUARY 24 AND INFORMED PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS IMMEDIATELY. GOVERNMENT THEN CALLED ALL THREE MILITARY SERVICES INTO STATE OF ALERT AND SUBSEQUENTLY MOVED TO ARREST CHIEF OFFICER PLOTTERS--NUMBERING BETWEEN 25 AND 35 ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS. MOST ACCOUNTS AGREE THAT COUP LEADERSHIP INCLUDED BGEN DERTILIS, LT.COL. STEIAKAKIS AND MAJOR PERDIKIS, ACTIVE SUPPORTERS OF FORMER MILITARY REGIME.

4. THE INITIAL GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT, BROADCAST ABOUT 1900 HOURS LOCAL TIME (ATHENS 1525), MERELY PRESENTED BAREBONE FACT THAT STATE OF ALERT HAD BEEN ORDERED. A SUBSEQUENT DEFENSE MINISTRY STATEMENT ISSUED A FEW HOURS LATER CONFIRMED THAT THERE HAD BEEN "CONSPIRATORIAL MOVEMENTS BY A TINY NUMBER OFF OFFICERS" IN REACTION TO WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN "SPECIAL MEASURES FOLLOWING A RECOMMENDATION OF THE DEFENSE MINISTER DURING A MEETING OF THE ARMED FORCES LEADERSHIP CHAIRED BY THE PRIME MINISTER." STATEMENT DENIED ANY "BROADER INSUBORDINATION WITHIN THE ARMY" AND ASSERTED THAT AT NO MOMENT DID CONSPIRATORIAL ACTIVITY DISTURB ORDER IN ANY GARRISON IN THE COUNTRY. STATEMENT CONCLUDED THAT ARMED FORCES LEADERSHIP WILL TAKE ALL APPROPRIATE MEASURES IN ITS DETERMINATION TO "DEAL MERCILESSLY WITH ANYONE DEVIATING FROM PATH OF HONOR." IN COURSE OF 2200 HOUR BROADCAST ON NATIONAL TV NETWORK  
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(EIRT), DEFENSE MININISTER AVEROFF PERSONALLY READ DEFMINISTRY STATEMENT AND ADDED PERSONAL ASSURANCE THAT "THERE NOT THE SLIGHTEST CAUSE FOR ALARM." HE REITERATED THAT DEMOCRATIC NORMALCY HAD BEEN RESTORED IN GREECE AND THAT A MOST CAPABLE MAN, CONSTANTINE CARAMANLIS, WAS CARRYING OUT A CLEAR PUBLIC MANDATE AND WAS ENJOYING THE SUPPORT OF OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF ARMED FORCES.

5. DURING COURSE OF PARLIAMENTARY SESSION SAME EVENING, CHIEF OPPOSITION LEADERS RAISED ISSUE OF COUP ATTEMPT AND DEMANDED THAT GOVERNMENT ENLIGHTEN THEM AND NATION ON FACTS OF CASE. PASOK LEADER PAPANDREOU DECLARED GOVERNMENT HAD "NATIONAL DUTY" TO PRESENT FULL DETAILS OF THAT EVENT WHICH WAS "THREATENING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS." HE DECLARED THAT TIME HAD COME TO STOP OFFERING PALLIATIVES TO PARLIAMENTARIANS SUCH AS AVEROFF HAD DONE PREVIOUSLY IN ASSURING THAT "ALL WAS WELL AND A CLEANSING HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT WITHIN ARMY." UNITED DEMOCRATIC LEFT LEADER ILIOU STATED IT CLEAR NECESSARY CLEANSING HAD NOT BEEN CARRIED OUT AND DUE TO "UNFORGIVEABLE TOLERANCE" THERE STILL EXISTS IN ARMED FORCES THOSE DREAMING OF NEW COPUS EVEN DURING TIMES OF ACUTE NATIONAL DANGER. CU/NF LEADER MAVROS LIKEWISE REQUESTED PARLIAMENT BE GIVEN FULL DETAILS OF ATTEMPTED COUP FACTS. IN RESPONSE, MINISTER COORDINATION PAPALIGOURAS REPLIED ON BEHALF OF GOVERNMENT AND ARGUED HAT ONLY "SOME INSANE ELEMENTS" HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN CONSPIRACY BUT THAT GOG HAD TAKEN-- AND WAS TAKING--ALL NECESSARY MEASURES, INCLUDING PROCLAMATION OF STATE OF ALERT. HE ASSERTED THAT SITUATION UNDER FULL CONTROL AND THERE NO GROUND FOR SLIGHTEST CONCERN.

6. ALL ATHENS DAILY NEWSPAPERS GAVE FULL FRONT-PAGE TREATMENT TO ATTEMPTED COUP WITH KATHIMERINE BEING THE MOST DETAILED AS TO PERSONALITIES INVOLVED. EXTENT OF COUP AS REPORTED BY PRESS STILL UNCLEAR WITH NUMBER OF NEWS ACCOUNTS SUGGESTING THAT DISAFFECTED ELEMENTS ATTEMPTED TO MOVE NOT ONLY IN ATHENS AREA (CENTERED IN GOUDI TANK TRAINING CENTER) BUT ALSO IN OTHER PARTS OF GREECE, E.G. KOZANI, LARISSA, ELEFSIS. EDITORIALS CARRIED BY TO VIMA AND AVGHI BOTH HIT SAME NOTE, E.G. GOVERNMENT CONFIDENTIAL

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HAD FAILED IN CARRYING OUT FULL CLEANSING PREVIOUSLY AND IT MUST NOW MOVE TO DO SO. AVGHI GOES ON TO RECOMMEND THAT MINISTER AVEROFF BE SACKED AND SUGGESTS THAT A NATO/AMERICAN CONSPIRACY LIES BEHIND COUP ATTEMPT.

7. SINCE FACTS STILL INCOMPLETE AS TO FULL SCOPE OF COUP ATTEMPT AND IDENTITIES OF ALL INDIVIDUALS AND UNITS INVOLVED, EMBASSY WILL AWAIT FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF SITUATION BEFORE FORWARDING ASSIGNMENT. KUBISCH

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## Message Attributes

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**Concepts:** MOBILIZATION, MILITARY PERSONNEL, GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, PRESS COMMENTS, ARRESTS, PLOTS, POLITICAL SITUATION  
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